



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

## BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

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May 24, 1975

TO: The Secretary  
THROUGH: P - Mr. Sisco  
FROM: AF - Nathaniel Davis

Meeting Angolan Contingencies

In a recent series of memoranda to you, AF has assessed Angolan developments and has suggested a range of choices available to us to meet a series of unfolding scenarios. This paper sets forth recommendations as to specific courses of action in three contingent situations most likely to obtain over the next few months. For purposes of this paper, the enclave of Cabinda is considered an integral part of Angola proper.

Contingency Two represents a progressive worsening of the current situation as described in Contingency One. Contingency Three stands alone -- it could conceivably erupt at any time, from any given set of circumstances. However, whichever contingency obtains, and even in the case of increased Soviet arms shipments to MPLA, it is unlikely that any one faction or combination of factions would be able to eliminate the other as an effective political force.

Ideally, we would wish the situation to remain as in Contingency One or, if the situation deteriorates, to return to it. Therefore, our recommendations aim at returning to Contingency One with a relative standoff in the power balance, a situation that we

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believe to be generally favorable to our interests and which meets our overall objective of containing the conflict and maintaining a balance of power in which political accommodation is both possible and necessary. In any case, we do not believe that U.S. interests in Angola are strong enough to warrant a high level of U.S. involvement or a significant commitment of U.S. resources, particularly in providing arms, which in the last analysis is the type of assistance most desired by all contending factions.

#### Contingent Situation 1

The situation remains relatively unchanged from what it is now through independence (November 11) with no significant realignment of the power factors and occasional outbreaks of serious, but limited, violence. Although in absolute terms all three liberation movements would gain both military and political strength, they would remain in the same relative proportion to each other, and the situation would remain basically a standoff with no one achieving a dominant military or political position. Soviet material assistance to the MPLA would remain at its current level (exact volume unknown). The Portuguese would remain in the background but would be prepared, however reluctantly, to interpose military forces in the event of spreading violence. The January agreement between the three liberation groups and Portugal would be modified, but would continue to provide for a coalition government both before and after independence. Together FNLA and UNITA would remain in a position to check the MPLA. All parties would make achieving independence on schedule their first priority.

#### U.S. Objectives

-- To minimize the violence, assuring the protection of U.S. lives and property.

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-- To influence a future government not to take positions prejudicial to U.S. interests.

-- To prevent the Angolan situation from deteriorating to the point of affecting the delicate balance elsewhere in southern Africa.

Recommended Courses of Action:

-- Continue to avoid direct, overt involvement in Angola's pre-independence struggle, but counsel restraint, privately or publicly as opportunities arise, e.g. during the next cycle of violence.

-- Carry out presently authorized program looking to expenditure of \$129,000 for support of FNLA's Holden Roberto between now and November.

-- Publicly encourage Portuguese efforts toward peaceful transition, making clear we continue to believe the problem is one to be resolved by Portugal and the Angolans themselves.

-- Improve intelligence collection to determine the volume of Soviet assistance to MPLA as accurately as possible.

Risks:

-- While this course might succeed in minimizing violence now, the growing military strength of all contenders would increase the potential for future confrontation between them.

-- FNLA, and thus Zaire's Mobutu, might feel this course provides insufficient support for their objective, i.e. denying political control of Angola to the MPLA.

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Contingent Situation 2

At some future point, it becomes clear to us that the balance is beginning to tip in favor of MPLA; Portugal becomes openly partial to it; Soviet assistance to it increases; MPLA openly seeks political control over Luanda and steps up political efforts in the countryside. FNLA and UNITA are at an increasing material disadvantage because of increasing Soviet arms supply to MPLA. Requests to us for assistance (including arms), supported by Zaire, become urgent. FNLA, encouraged by Zaire, prepares for pre-emptive strike against MPLA. The potential for all-out armed confrontation grows.

U.S. Objectives

- Re-establish balance of forces.
- Limit flow of external assistance to MPLA.
- Contain potential for conflict to Angola.

Recommended Courses of Action:

-- Seek to dissuade Soviets from increasing assistance to MPLA; enlist Zambia, Tanzania, Botswana and perhaps other African countries in this effort. In a parallel effort, seek to dissuade Zaire from intervening militarily.

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-- In order to dampen down potential for all-out confrontation, seek to discourage pre-emptive FNLA strike.

-- In consultation with interested Africans, suggest formation of an inter-African, or international, watch-dog committee to monitor situation and make recommendations.

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-- Consider the advisability of consultation with NATO and interested Africans in an attempt to dissuade Portugal from actions that could lead Angola to civil war and could thus seriously affect Portugal's internal situation.

Risks: (While some of the above recommended actions could be taken under Contingent Situation One, the attendant risk of exacerbating tensions outweighs the advantages to be derived in a situation which is still favorable to our overall interests.)

-- Would clearly identify our interests in the area and open us to charges of interference.

-- Increased support to FNLA and UNITA, if extended, could have reverse effect of exacerbating tensions and stimulating a greater Soviet commitment.

-- Angolan liberation groups might all reject efforts to internationalize issue.

### Contingent Situation 3

Situation deteriorates with widespread and sustained fighting, and a total breakdown of existing administrative and political structures. Confusion prevails and no faction gains the upper hand in the short term. It is difficult at best for us to determine the relative fortunes of the contesting parties.

Each combatant calls for increased outside support. Outside powers would be strongly tempted to increase assistance to their clients, i.e. the Soviets and perhaps the Portuguese to the MPLA; Zaire and possibly the PRC to the FNLA.

Zambia and Tanzania step up their efforts to seek a political solution. The OAU attempts to moderate the situation. Portugal and some African countries seek UN efforts to restore order.

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U.S. Objectives

- Contain conflict to Angola in order to maintain delicate balance in southern Africa.
- Limit outside involvement that might lead to big power confrontation.
- Achieve a cease-fire in Angola.
- Divert conflict into diplomatic/political channels where our ability to influence the situation would be enhanced.
- Prevent MPLA takeover.

Recommended Courses of Action:

- Actively encourage African efforts to achieve -- and monitor -- a cease-fire. Encourage and support OAU efforts to restore order.
- Work with interested Africans, the OAU, and/or the UN to limit intervention of other African states and to bring pressure on USSR and other arms suppliers.
- Warn Soviets of potential for big-power confrontation inherent in situation.
- If taken to the UN, support efforts to restore order but resist any maneuvers by Soviets and/or Portugal to exploit UN action for the purpose of placing MPLA in control.
- If foregoing efforts fail and it appears that MPLA is gaining the upper hand, review U.S. covert support policy and levels with respect to all factions.

Risks:

- OAU efforts are unlikely to restore order.

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-- USSR might seek U.S. concessions elsewhere  
that we are not prepared to make.

-- UN action might provide increased opportunities  
for Soviet influence in Angola.

*SRM* *TA*  
Drafted: AF/S:SFMcdonald/Aarenales  
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Concurrences:

INR/DDC - Mr. McAfee  
(intelligence assessments)  
EUR/IB - Mr. Kelly *WJ*

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